1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
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families do not express their antagonism openly, for this would be a serious breach of etiquette. Interestingly enough, neither of the two families which personally possess these private gods is a member of any *tsu* organization in the village. It appears that the possession of these gods by the two families is a means that each family has used to establish a place for itself in the village. The family in possession of Er Shih Kung, the god which has become popular in the village seems to have actually achieved this goal.

Other Supernatural Beings, Forces, and Beliefs

In addition to gods and ancestors the villagers believe in evil supernatural beings. They are known as demons or *kuei*, but, out of fear of their malevolence and respect for their power, the villagers more often speak of them as gods or *shen*. The already mentioned Good Brothers belong to this group of *kuei*. "When one hits such a bad thing," one's spirit becomes possessed or is taken away by the supernatural being, and sickness, ill-fortune, or even death may result. It then becomes necessary to secure the services of a shaman or diviner to determine the cause of the trouble and appease the spirit.

Fate and Divination

Beyond and stronger than the influence of gods and spirits is an all-pervasive force, fate. It affects and predetermines the over-all direction of life and events. The fate of an individual is determined by his eight birth characters and "the set of forces of Yin-Yang and the Five Elements, which were connected with the movement of the stars in directing the mystical operation of time, which, in turn, determined the nature of personal events" (Yang, 1961:135). The Hsin Hsing villagers' belief in the concept of fate was well described by Kulp (1925:171) for Phenix Village when he wrote,

> Fate decides all things. Fate determined the time of birth and it will determine the hour of death, the manner of death and the experiences between birth and death. It is useless to strive against fate. All one can do is to learn the will of fate and conform in the best possible way. One may try to outwit fate but sooner or later one is doomed to defeat. Such are the attitudes that people hold regarding the great events and experiences of life.

This belief leads to various forms of divination that are designed to determine what the individual has in store for him and what, if anything, can be done about it. Thus, if resort to ancestors, gods, magic, or medicines fails to produce results, the difficulty is accepted as predetermined by fate. The concept is especially valuable in preventing a weakening of the general belief structure, for if all attempts at manipulation through supernatural influence should fail, the concept of fate

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
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MAGICAL RITUALISM

As indicated earlier in this chapter, magic requires a distinctive type of ritual in Hsin Hsing village supernaturalism. Perhaps the most important single use for magical ritual in the Hsin Hsing area is the curing of illness. As we noted above, the increased availability of Western medicine, especially since the early 1950's, the accessibility of practitioners trained in these ways, and the evidences of their success have turned the villagers more and more away from traditional practices, at least as the major and usually the initial source of help. Thus, the villager now tends to turn to the magical ritual only when he feels that modern science has failed him. However, it remains true that the traditional ritualistic patterns fulfill social, psychological, and even therapeutic functions beyond what is possible for the scientific.

The Diagnosis of Illness

Nowadays, when illness strikes, the villagers observe its symptoms and try to determine its nature. From experience with certain basic sets of symptoms, illnesses are distinguished as being either in the realm of the physiological or supernatural, and therefore requiring a cure within that particular realm. Thanks to the villagers' new awareness of the germ theory of disease, most illnesses are immediately classified as physiological and, therefore, within the domain of science and medicine—primarily modern, Western-style medicine rather than Chinese herbal medicine. Such illnesses as measles, rashes and skin diseases, trachoma, colds, stomach disorders supposedly resulting from bad food or water, and the like, all fall clearly into this category. To treat these illnesses, it is now customary for the villagers either to call in a Western-style practitioner or to choose their own drugs or patent medicines.

There are still a few illnesses or symptoms, however, which are likely to be considered of supernatural origin—caused by a demon or one of the many spirits which are believed to inhabit numerous natural places and objects. These supernaturally caused ailments are best treated by supernatural means. Some forms of insanity, and the frequently unexplained crankiness in children—especially in cases where the child's spirit is believed to have been affected by a "frightening" incident—fall within this area.

It is a commonplace among villagers that "No medicine can help if a person runs into something evil," for example, one of the demons known as *kuei* or *mo shen*. Consequently, when the practitioner of Western medicine is unsuccessful in curing an ailment, the illness is

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
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753 755 clearly of supernatural origin and must be attacked by someone versed in supernatural methods—the shaman.

755 757 177 178 There is no particular problem with illnesses which can be clearly diagnosed as natural or supernatural. But there are many cases in which the diagnosis is not so easy or clear-cut. Mainly, the villagers rely on past experience to tell them which set of symptoms indicates which category of illness, and thus which kind of practitioner to call in. Naturally, there are considerable variations among the villagers themselves which may predispose a decision in one direction or the other—level of education, amount of experience, financial ability, and even types of social pressure. As one would expect, the actual availability of drugs and doctors affects choice. In recent years the dependence upon Western medicines and Western-oriented doctors has increased as a result of the increased supply of both at relatively low cost. The ease of access to antibiotics and patent medicines, their effectiveness, and the doctors' record of successes have given confidence in Western science, with the result that it is common today for the villagers to turn to Western methods first for most illnesses.

Many villagers now also feel that it is simpler to call in a Western-style doctor. A shaman often requires the assistance of two or three other people who must be asked in to help in the ritual, at their convenience. Further, when the Western doctor is called in, he charges a fee, and with its payment the transaction is completed. There is no residual feeling of obligation which must be discharged. The shaman, if he is a local one, usually charges nothing at all for his services, and often it is more comfortable not to incur such a feeling of obligation. Then, there are a number of incidental expenses connected with his visit—the cost of sacrifices and the food for all the participants and observers at the ritual.

Having two types of medical practice at one's disposal is not always an unmixed blessing, however, since the decision that an illness is natural or supernatural may be, or may be held to be, influenced by external circumstances. A case in point is the following which happened to a very poor family in Hsin Hsing. The parents were no longer young and already had three daughters and a small son when another daughter was born. Before the infant was named (naming takes place on the ninth day and is, in effect, when an infant becomes human) she became quite ill. Instead of calling in a practitioner of Western medicine, which many villagers insisted they would have done first, the family chose to consider the illness supernatural because the baby was not yet nine-days-old. They called in one shaman, and then another. Despite their efforts, the infant died. Under the traditional ideas the death was attributable to the will of the gods, and the family had done all it could do. The villagers gossiped busily about

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the event, however, noting that the family was poor and had too many girls already; implicit in their gossip was a recognition that the family may have preferred to have the female infant die.

The attitude of the villagers toward the old and new medicine is a useful example of the way in which practical, external factors can affect "folk" beliefs and values. Here availability, finances, and family circumstances have combined to promote the acceptance of a new body of knowledge. The rural community of the Hsin Hsing area has accepted Western medicine without damage to its value structure or to its beliefs, incorporating the new quite comfortably into the old framework. Thus, when the villager calls upon a Western-style medical practitioner first of all, and the illness is not cured, he can still reinterpret the symptoms and assume that the cause was supernatural after all—perhaps possession by a demon. Then, to cope with the supernatural, he calls in a shaman.

Shamanistic Curing

Probably the most common form of illness treated in this manner is that which the villagers call a "fright" (*ching*). In this "illness" a child or infant does not eat or sleep properly and cries a great deal. The mother may decide that the child "has hit into a bad thing" (*ch'ung*) and that some kind of malevolent demon is causing the trouble. Although she may call in a Western-style doctor, most villagers assume that such symptoms result from supernatural causes and therefore require supernatural treatment.

The many different kinds of charms and instruments at the disposal of the *fa shih* are designed to enable him to bring about the release of the child's soul or spirit. If the patient does not respond at once to treatment, it may be repeated in a day or two or a more powerful *fa shih* may be called in. For the most part, whatever was causing the symptoms, they usually disappear after a few days, and the villagers consider that the *fa shih's* powers have cured the child.

Sometimes in the case of a fright a parent will attempt to effect a cure without the aid of a formally recognized shaman, especially when it appears that the child has been frightened by a definite agent which has caused his spirit to leave his body. If, for example, a dog is believed responsible, the parent will secure some of the dog's hair, wave it over the child's chest, and repeat over and over, "child's spirit return to the child." Or, the parent may feel that the child was frightened by some person. This was the case when a bearded American friend of ours visited the village and frightened a child. The American was then asked to spit into a cup brought by the child's mother. The saliva was brewed with some soup, fed to the child, and incantations were repeated to help the child's spirit return.

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
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them to resort to ritual means. Neither their own nor their neighbor's consciences would allow them to let a member of the family die without the attempt to benefit from supernatural intervention.

It was probably these two factors, social pressure and fear of leaving any method untried, which opened the way for the very notable acceptance of Western medicine in Taiwan. While the skeptic is thus forced by them to call upon the shaman, the traditionalists are likewise forced to call upon Western medicine when traditional methods have failed. As we saw in the case of the baby girl who died, the village did not feel that calling even upon two shamans was a clear indication that the family wanted the child to live; it was strongly felt that a Western doctor should have been called in as well. The general disapproval is not simply an example of the increased faith in Western medicine, but a reflection of a total attitude toward the control of unknown and powerful forces. After all, the microbe theory of illness is often, even in the enlightened West, only another species of demonology.

Many of the functions of the magical rituals we have just discussed are also similar for the religious (*pai-pai*) rites. People look forward to the many *pai-pai* held in the village area. At the very least they offer a change in the daily routine of life. Many of them are occasions filled with thrills and excitement (*je nao*). This is particularly true of shamanistic rituals, and scores of villagers may flock to the scene of the performance. Young boys and men who have worked in Taipei and who, for various reasons, have been forced to return to the village almost always attend such events. These men seem to yearn for something to replace the excitement of the city.

Since community pressures for thrift also have tended to standardize the villagers' diet, even the most insignificant *pai-pai* represents an opportunity to eat better than ordinary food. A village family, unless wealthy, is criticized for eating any but the simplest food on ordinary days. People gossip behind their backs about their extravagance and general lack of thrift. Then, if the family should have to borrow money or need village aid at a future date, people may cite their extravagance and irresponsibility as a reason for refusing them. Thus, even the simplest *pai-pai*, like those held on the first, second, fifteenth, and sixteenth of each month, offer people a welcome justification for eating good food, and the bigger the *pai-pai*, the better the food.

The most obvious functions of the *pai-pai* are often recognized by the villagers themselves. There are several other important functions that the villagers may not talk about unless they are questioned about them.

Although in the process of organizing and administering *pai-pai*

769 go in preparing special dishes for particular ancestors. When the family with whom we lived made their annual deathday offerings to the father of the head of the household they always included sweet rice cakes because the old man had been particularly fond of them.

769 753 Even those villagers who deny that the ancestors "really eat those things" are somewhat less certain about what might happen if the offerings were discontinued completely. We found numerous examples of illnesses and other misfortunes which were attributed to the neglect of an ancestor. The various misfortunes of one village woman were attributed to her deceased father-in-law who was angry because she had failed to cook his favorite dish for the New Year's offerings; the illness of a child was ascribed to his father's deceased parents who were said to be angry because their son had made a matrilocal marriage; and the illness of another village child was interpreted as being the result of his grandfather's older brother's "coming to call him." This man had died without children of his own, and so the family was advised to give him their son in adoption as a means of placating him. If a family neglects their duties towards the ancestors, the ancestors may plague them with illness and other misfortune, but it is important to note that the ancestors do not represent a more general morality. They are concerned only with their own good and the good of the family, not with general morality and the good of society. When we asked villagers if their ancestors would punish them for committing a crime, such as theft or murder, the typical response was, "Why should they do that? We are all members of the same family. We are

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fifteen years since Lim Bi-kok destroyed his tablets, his family is still the only family in Hsiachichou which does not make regular offerings to their ancestors.

The relationship between the living and the dead is a reciprocal one. The living are expected to provide the means of support for their ancestors in the next world, and the ancestors are expected to protect and succor their living descendants. Such a conception of man's relationship with his deceased forbears naturally makes it extremely important for a man to produce children. The man who fails to provide descendants to carry on the ancestral rites after his own death fails in his obligations to his parents just as surely as if he had failed to support them in their old age. Just as they needed rice and a comfortable place to live in this life, so they need living descendants who will continue to provide them with the necessities of existence in the next world. Moreover, the man who fails to provide children to insure the ancestor's future risks their loss of support in the business of this life, and may actually suffer various disasters as a result of their anger at his failure. No villager would be surprised by a statistic which reported that illnesses were more common among the children of matrilocal marriages than those of patrilocal marriages. And finally, the man who fails to produce male offspring condemns himself. Without children to make sacrifices to him after his own death, he is doomed to an existence as a "wandering ghost," begging for scraps of food at temple doors. When we asked a number of villagers the meaning of the terms hȏu miā: and pāi miā:, "good fortune"

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over 70. Around the village she wears dark cotton pants, hemmed to a clumsy level between ankle and knee, and a white Mandarin smock, sleeveless in summer and long-sleeved in winter. For her infrequent trips to Tapu or nearby temples, she wears dark Mandarin-collared dresses cut so loosely and with such decorous side slits that their generic relationship with the fashionable, clinging cheong-sam of Hongkong is questionable. Her hair is parted in the middle and pulled tightly back into a neat knot low on her neck. It is rarely disordered even in the roughest of farm work because (much to the horror of my modern minded interpreter) she keeps a heavy coating of fat on it.

Lim A-pou's extraordinary old-fashionedness, or devotion to tradition, is not limited to her dress. I found her, as do many of her neighbors, an excellent informant on ancient home remedies, rituals for placating household gods and ghosts, techniques for protecting pregnant women, and for purifying rooms following childbirth. Part of her conflict with her late husband's younger brother, Lim Chieng-cua, results from his introduction of more economical practices in the ceremonies honoring the ancestors. Many families on Taiwan now combine the ceremonies celebrating their more distant ancestors' birth and death days, presenting the expensive offerings of meat and fowl to them all on the same day, rather than repeating the expense for each on their specific anniversary. Besides this, Lim Chieng-cua also abolished the bi-monthly offerings to Tu Ti Kung—a less expensive ceremony but one that has not been celebrated in many households for decades. A-pou bitterly resented these omissions and continued to offer an apologetic bit of incense each night and morning to preserve what to her was at least a semblance of propriety. When Lim Chieng-cua installed the new pump in the house without consulting the almanac, A-pou was angry for days. According to the almanac, the Placenta God was resting in that particular room on that particular day. Through Lim Chieng-cua's negligence, the little god was disturbed or injured, and he took his vengeance on A-pou's grandson in the form of a high fever. Before the fever was finally controlled with an injection of penicillin, Lim Chieng-cua and his nephew, the father of the child, had to endure a week of foul humor, both of them alarmed by the illness and neither of them believing in A-pou's theory of causation.

Due to the indiscretion of the only other person who knew of the event, I learned of Lim A-pou's one lapse from rigid respectability.

776 everyone prosperous but she argued that then there would be no one left to carry her sedan chair. She won the argument and many people therefore remain poor and consequently, villagers refuse to worship her. They all agree that most women do have a similar ability to influence their husband's behavior.

Miscellaneous Holy Places

778 Some years ago, a set of human bones was found under the bridge at the border of Erhlei and Sanlei. A general collection was made and the bones were interred on the site in a small shrine where people worship periodically as [753] needed, especially women who have sick children. The attitude seems to be that the spirit causes trouble such as sickness unless periodically propitiated.

In back of Liao Kan-yi's house (head of the major temple committee and owner of the oldest village store) is a special holy rock installed by his grandfather. No one remembers the reason for worshipping the rock, but on the first and fifteenth of each month, his family worships it with food sacrifices and three incense sticks. A younger grandson is often delegated the task. There are several trees and other rocks at which special worship is made. For example, some years ago a boy fell on a rock and was [782] in a coma for several days. His mother worshipped at the rock on which he fell and promised that if her son got well

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but a majority were critical although all reinforced cultural values and standards.

A sample of the god's statements is listed below followed by my personal comments or explanations. As previously stated, in a normal situation, few of these statements would be permitted for seldom is there a face to face confrontation between an accuser and accusee unless the situation is going to degenerate into a serious fight. (Names are all disguised for obvious reasons.)

[785] 1. "Liao A.B.! You are a sincere man. I have helped you to recover your health. I am happy that you always come to clean and take care of the temple." (Subject had prostate trouble with considerable discharge. After various types of medical and shamanistic treatment failed to bring relief, he made a pledge at the temple that if the gods helped he would worship daily forever. The pain is almost gone and he seldom has any more discharge. Each morning, at daybreak, he opens the temple, pai pai's with incense, and puts flowers in the vases. Every villager is aware of his pledge and performance.)

[511] [364] 2. "Liao C.D.! You are a bad-hearted[9] woman. You would not clean the dirty ditch in front of your house so the dirty water runs into the pond where other villagers wash clothes and vegetables." (Subject immediately ran off to clean her ditch. She frequently quarreled with her husband and his brother's wife.)

[755] 3. "Liao E.F.! Your second son has poor health. I will give him a charm. He should drink it in the early morning." (Subject is a community leader and head of an extended household. The charm is a package of herbs to be mixed with hot water. "To give" means that the speaking god will guide the proper stick out when the vase of medicine sticks is shaken.)

[784] [753] [755] 4. "Huang G.H.! Your wife is sick because she dried women's underpants in the kung t'ing in front of the gods. I will give you a charm for her to drink." (Subject is a local official and well liked.)

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5. "Liao I.J.! Old man, you are a good person and serve the gods. But your son is a bad-hearted person. He says bad things about people behind their backs." (The son is unfilial and wants to marry a village girl but her parents are refusing the match by asking a bride price of more than five times the standard amount.)

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6. "Huang K.L.! Your sons' eyes hurt because you picked a bad day to fix your kitchen. You never worship the god's soldiers on the 1st and 15th of each month. You should worship on these days. I will give you charms for your family to drink." (Subject has a reputation for cheapness and refuses to spend proper amounts on ritual.)

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7. "Yu M.N.! Your eldest son is not strong because the altar in your kung t'ing is not properly located. You should think about your second son's marriage because he is too embarrassed to talk to you about it." (The altar is one of the two in the village on the side rather than the back wall in relationship to the door. The man through whom the gods were now speaking was the "second son" mentioned in the statement.)

8. "Chiu O.P.! Your son is fine. Do not worry about him." (Subject is poor but considered to be a good man. His son is in the army and stationed in Kin Men.)

As can be seen from the above samples, the gods speak through the young men to reinforce common values. We talked to many people afterwards and none thought that the two boys through whom the gods spoke were bad-hearted people; that is, they believed that the statements really came from the gods. They said that in the past, bad-hearted people have tried to pretend they were gods but they always got caught.

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About 3:30 p.m., the shaman interpreted a character written in the sand with the poles of a sedan chair as